

Message Text

SECRET POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 01416 151846 Z

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6896

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AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

S E C R E T BRUSSELS 1416

EXDIS

NOFORN

VIENNA FOR US REP MBFR

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, BE

SUB: MBFR; BELGIAN ACTIVITIES WITH THE EAST

REF: VIENNA 1998

1. SUMMARY WE TEND TO AGREE WITH US REP MBFR THAT THERE IS LITTLE TO BE GAINED BY PURSUING FURTHER ADRIAENSSEN' S REVELATIONS OF BELGIAN BILATERAL DEALINGS WITH THE SOVIETS, WHICH, IF ACCURATE, REFLECT VERY BAD JUDGMENT, NAIVETE AND FRUSTRATION ON THE PART OF THE BELGIANS AND, IN GENERAL, THE STRAINS TO WHICH ALLIED UNITY IS BEING SUBJECTED AS A RESULT OF THE IMPASSE OVER PARTICIPATION. THE PERSONALITIES OF THE BELGIANS INVOLVED ALSO HAVE A BEARING ON THE MATTER. END SUMMARY.

2. ADRIAENSSEN HAD SPENT ONLY A COUPLE OF WEEKS IN HIS NEW JOB AS HEAD OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICE THAT HANDLES ARMAMENT/ DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS BEFORE HE WENT TO VIENNA TO LEAD THE BELGIAN DELEGATION. HIS EARLIER AMBASSADORIAL TOUR IN BUCHAREST MAY HAVE GIVEN HIM INSIGHTS INTO EASTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS, BUT HIS CREDENTIALS AS A DISARMAMENT EXPERT
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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 01416 151846 Z

ARE HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE. HE BELIEVES THAT HIS NEW JOB IN BRUSSELS DOES NOT FULLY EXPLOIT HIS TALENTS, AND HE HAS TOLD US THAT HE WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR BELGIAN PARTICIPATION IN CSCE AS WELL AS MBFR, A CLAIM THAT NONE OF OUR OTHER CONTACTS IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE CAN VERIFY. ADRIAENSSEN IS BREEZY AND CASUAL TO A FAULT, AND THIS, COMBINED WITH HIS QUEST AFTER IMPORTANCE, MAY EXPLAIN HIS WILLINGNESS TO TELL DEAN AND QUARLES ABOUT BELGIAN INDISCRETIONS THAT HE PERHAPS THOUGHT CLEVER.

3. WILLOT IS THE EXPERT TO WHOM SENIOR BELGIAN OFFICIALS LOOK FOR ADVICE ON MBFR, AND WE HAVE BEEN TOLD OF HIS DIRECT LINES TO POLITICAL DIRECTOR DAVIGNON AND FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER HARMEL. (WE CANNOT SAY WHETHER THE SAME RELATIONSHIP EXISTS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE.) BY SHEER FORCE OF EXPERTISE, WILLOT MANAGES TO ADVANCE HIS IDEAS THROUGH THE BELGIAN BUREAUCRACY WITHOUT FEAR OF CONTRADICTION ON TECHNICAL GROUNDS. (DE STAERCKE IS OF COURSE A POWER IN HIS OWN RIGHT, AND WE SUSPECT HIS SENSE OF INDEPENDENCE IS HEIGHTENED BY THE FACT THAT HE EXPECTS TO RETIRE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.)

4. AS POINTED OUT IN PARA 2 REFTEL, ADRIAENSSEN' S DISCUSSION OF NON- CIRCUMVENTION WITH DUBYNIN PUT THE BELGIANS IN THE POSITION OF HAVING REPEATED THE TRANSGRESSIONS OF THE DUTCH AND BRITISH. THE GERMANS ALSO HAVE SPOKEN TO THE EAST ABOUT THE IMPOR
TANCE
OF CONSTRAINTS (PARA 4 OF VIENNA 1680), ALTHOUGH WE NOTE THAT THE GERMANS AND THE DUTCH REGRETTED THAT THE EAST HAD RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT CONSTRAINTS WERE PARAMOUNT IN WESTERN THINKING (PARA 5 OF VIENNA 1860). IN SHORT, ADRIAENSSEN' S TALK WITH DUBYNIN, HOWEVER LAMENTABLE, SEEMS TO US TO BE PART OF THE GENERAL PROBLEM OF ALLIES INDIVIDUALLY CASTING ABOUT FOR A SOLUTION TO THE VEXING PARTICIPATION PROBLEM.

5. WE VIEW MUCH MORE SERIOUSLY ADRIAENSSEN' S STORY ABOUT WILLOT' S COLLABORATION WITH TIMERBAYEV ON THE " BELGIAN PROPOSAL", ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT ENTIRELY DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY THAT ADRIAENSSEN MADE THIS UP AS A WAY OF DISSOCIATING HIMSELF FROM A " BELGIAN" (OR A WILLOT) PROPOSAL THAT FAILED TO MOVE THE RUSSIANS. ASSUMING IT IS TRUE, HOWEVER, WE WONDER WHETHER WILLOT MET WITH TIMERBAYEV ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE OR WHETHER THE LATTER FED WILLOT A SOVIET IDEA. IN EITHER CASE, WE DO NOT KNOW AT WHAT POINT ADRIAENSSEN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BRUSSE 01416 151846 Z

OR WILLOT' S SUPERIORS IN BRUSSELS (AT NATO OR THE FOREIGN OFFICE) LEARNED OF THE " COLLABORATION" OR, IN FACT, WHETHER

WILLOT'S ACTIONS WERE APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY DAVIGNON OR VAN ELSLANDE. QUITE ASIDE FROM THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF ADRIA-ENSSSEN'S DISCLOSURES, THEN, THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS WASHINGTON WOULD WISH TO CONSIDER IF ANY PROTEST TO THE BELGIANS IS CONTEMPLATE.

6. THE WAY THE BELGIANS SUBSEQUENTLY HANDLED THEIR PAPER RAISES RELATED QUESTIONS. IF THE PAPER WAS IN FACT A JOINT PRODUCT, WHY WOULD THE BELGIANS HAVE FELT IT NECESSARY TO "LEAK" THE WHOLE PAPER TO THE POLES (AND OTHER EASTERNERS)? IF IT WAS PURELY A BELGIAN PRODUCT, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE DELIVERY OF ALL ELEVEN POINTS TO THE POLES MAY WELL HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED BY BELGIAN FRUSTRATION AND EVEN ANGER OVER THE EMASCULATION OF THE BELGIAN PROPOSAL AND ITS PRESENTATION TO THE SOVIETS AND HUNGARIANS IN A MANNER SEEMINGLY CALCULATED TO MAKE IT UNACCEPTABLE. WITH REGARD TO ADRIAENSSSEN'S REMARK ABOUT DE STAERCKE (PARA 3 REFTTEL), THE RECORD IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR ON WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADDING THE REQUIREMENT THAT HUNGARY DECLARE ITSELF AT THE FIRST PLENARY. SYG LUNS APPEARS TO HAVE PLAYED A PROMINENT ROLE. AS FOR DE STAERCKE, HE SEEMS TO HAVE AGREED TO THE NEED FOR PRE- PLENARY EASTERN UNDERSTANDING OF HUNGARY'S EVENTUAL STATUS BUT NOT NECESSARILY TO THE NEED FOR A STATEMENT TO THAT EFFECT IN PLENARY SESSION (PARAS 6 AND 10 OF USNATO 906).

7. NONE OF THE FOREGOING IS INTENDED AS ANY APOLOGY FOR WHAT, AT THIS DISTANCE, APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A HIGHLY INAPPROPRIATE MOVE ON THE PART OF THE BELGIANS; BUT IN VIEW OF THE IMPONDERABLES NOTED ABOVE, WE QUESTION THE UTILITY OF ANY FOLLOW- UP REACTION FROM HERE. EMBASSY HAS COMMENTED AT UNUSUAL LENGTH IN HOPE THAT OUR APPRECIATION OF LOCAL PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND MOTIVATIONS WILL ASSIST IN DEALING WITH FUTURE CONTINGENCIES.
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